

THE EXTREMELY FINE INDIA GENERAL SERVICE AND ABYSSINIA PAIR AWARDED TO A LIEUTENANT, LATER MAJOR-GENERAL, WHO DURING THE UMBEYLA CAMPAIGN, WAS TWICE WOUNDED WHEN 250 FANATICS GHAZIS ARMED WITH SWORDS, LAUNCHED THEMSELVES INTO THE RANKS OF THE 23RD AND 32ND PIONEERS. IN THE DESPERATE HAND TO HAND FIGHTING, THAT LASTED NO MORE THAN A FEW MINUTES, 5 BRITISH OFFICERS AND NUMEROUS OTHER RANKS WERE KILLED OR WOUNDED. HE LATER TOOK PART IN THE ABYSSINIAN WAR WHERE HIS REGIMENT SUFFERED APPROXIMATELY HALF THE CASUALTIES OF THE ENTIRE CAMPAIGN IN ABYSSINIA



INDIA GENERAL SERVICE 1854, CLASP, UMBEYLA 'LIEUT. F. H. B. MARSH, 32ND PUNJAB PIONS.', ABYSSINIA 1867 'CAPTAIN F. H. B. MARSH, 23RD REG. N.I.'

Frank Hale Berwick Marsh was born in Patna, Bengal, on 26 July 1841, the son of Colonel Hippisley Marsh, Indian Staff Corps, late 18th Bengal Lancers. Commissioned Lieutenant on the General List on 4 November 1860, he served in the campaign on the North West Frontier of India in 1863 with the 32nd Punjab Pioneers, taking part in the Umbeyla campaign.

The Umbeyla campaign, undertaken between 20 October and 23 December 1863, was directed against Muslim tribesmen in Sittana and focused on the village of Malka. The tribesmen had harboured Indian mutineers in 1857 and were still resisting British rule over a decade later. The Yusafzai Field Force under General Sir Neville Chamberlain advanced up the Umbeyla Pass against strong opposition. Heavy casualties were sustained during attempts to hold the 'Eagle's Nest' and 'Crag Piquet'. The troops were organised into two brigades which drove the rebels out of the valley and a small party then burnt Malka.

The 32nd Punjab Pioneers formed part of General Garvock's force that attacked the village of Lalloo and Conicall hill on 15 December 1863. The following day, during the advance on Umbeyla, gaps appeared in the advancing British column and at this moment, 250 of the most determined fanatics armed with swords, launched themselves into the ranks of the 23rd and 32nd Pioneers. In the desperate hand to hand fighting, that lasted no more than a few minutes, 5 British Officers (including Lieutenant Marsh) were killed or wounded, as were numerous other ranks. The Pioneers were quickly rallied by Major Wright and Roberts VC (later Lord Roberts), leaving 200 of the brave Ghazis.

Lieutenant Marsh was twice wounded during the attack and would later be mentioned in despatches. The expedition itself suffered 238 dead and 670 wounded, this including 15 Officers killed and 21 wounded.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ambela_campaign

Having been advanced to Captain, Marsh served in the Abyssinian War and was present with the 23rd Pioneers at the battle of Arogee where the regiment suffered approximately half the casualties of the entire campaign in Abyssinia. Promoted Captain on 1 November 1868, Major on 2 May 1878, and Lieutenant-Colonel on 10 June 1888, Marsh transferred to the Unemployed List with the rank of Major-General on 12 November 1897. He died in Folkestone, Kent, on 25 January 1923

THE ATTACK ON THE PIONEERS, 16 DECEMBER 1863, FROM THE HISTORY OF THE SIKH PIONEERS

"....By this time the Second Column, although they had further to go, had deployed immediately opposite the village of Umbeyla, and so Colonel Turner was ordered to try and cut off the rear of the enemy from the Pass as they retreated.

“With this in view he formed a line of the 23rd Pioneers and Left Wing of the 32nd Pioneers, with the Right Wing of that regiment in column of companies at wheeling distance, left in front, and directed their advance along the south-western face of the village of Umbeyla, the Left Wing of the 7th Royal Fusiliers forming the reserve. After passing the village, which was in flames, the Right Wing of the 32nd was brought up in prolongation of the line to the right. The advance was steadily continued in the same order to within about 800 yards of the mouth of the pass, when the enemy opened a furious fire of matchlock and zamburaks, which was returned by the line as it continued to advance. As a large body of the enemy were observed moving to their right and beyond the left flank. Colonel Turner moved two companies from the reserve of Fusiliers.

“Seeing these movements, the enemy made a furious onset, sword in hand, upon the left flank of the line (i.e. on the Pioneers), which was now in broken ground covered with jungle. Some 250 blue-clad fanatics burst forth from a ravine waving their banners and attacked the Pioneer Regiments. The 33rd and 32nd were staggered for a moment by the suddenness of the onslaught, and in a moment five of their officers were on the ground—Lieut. G. Alexander of the 23rd being killed, and Captain C. F. F. Chamberlain and Lieut. C. D. P. Nott of the 23rd, and Major T. Wheeler and Lieut. F. H. B. Marsh of the 32nd wounded. But turning quickly on their assailants, the Pioneers rallied and destroyed the whole of them, allowing one to escape. Upwards of two hundred of their bodies lay upon the field, forty of whom were Hindustanis. Flushed with success, the Pioneer Regiments now pushed forward into the Pass, driving the enemy before them.”



Field-Marshal Earl Roberts, V.C., then Major Roberts, A.Q.M.G., who was with Wylde's Column, had conveyed the order to Colonel Turner for this movement which led to the assault on the Pioneers, and in his *Forty-one Years in India*, he says that:

"Just at that moment a band of Ghazis furiously attacked the left flank, which was at a disadvantage, having got into broken ground, covered with low jungle. In a few seconds five of the Pioneer British officers were on the ground,—one killed and four wounded; numbers of the men were knocked over, and the rest, staggered by the suddenness of the assault, fell back on the reserve, where they found the needed support, for the Fusiliers stood as firm as a rock. At the critical moment when the Ghazis made their charge, Wright, the A.A.G. and I, being close by, rushed in among the Pioneers and called on them to follow us; as we were personally known to the men of both regiments, they quickly pulled themselves together and responded to our efforts to rally them."

Thus it appears from the above that Lord Roberts was chiefly responsible in rallying the Pioneers, but the next account shows that Captain Chamberlain found that they had been able to do so on their own. This interesting account of the Ghazi charge has been communicated to the 32nd history by Mr. John Campbell, of Kilberry, Argyllshire, then a subaltern in the 93rd Highlanders.

"I happened to be looking on when the zoo Ghazis made their splendid charge on the two Muzbee regiments, and I shall never forget the scene. Early on the morning of the 16th December, Colonel Probyn went up the hill with his own cavalry and that of the Guides to join the force at Laloo. The guns of Griffin's Battery were to remain at the top of the gorge till the force got on to the plain, and then join them. The force appeared about i p.m. and the guns went down the gorge on elephants. There were a great many of the enemy between the foot of the hills and the village of Umbeyla, but as the force advanced they all scuttled into the hills behind the village. Our force advanced over the plain, the loist with a lot of natives on the left of Umbeyla, and the 7th Fusiliers to the right. Behind the village the 23rd and 32nd Muzbee Sikhs were charged by a body of the enemy and were rather taken aback, but they recovered themselves quickly and made a charge on the nigger, of whom they killed over two hundred. They were with two exceptions, Hindustanis. They came on out of a narrow and deep nullah madly—with tulwars. Alexander of the 23rd was killed and Charlie Chamberlain, Nott and Marsh (Marsh actually belonged to the 32nd) of the same regiment were wounded. One officer of the 32nd was also wounded (Major Wheeler). The 23rd and 32nd were the only regiments engaged.

"As far as I can remember Charlie Chamberlain, a Major, was commanding the two Muzbee regiments when the Ghazis attacked the left flank of the 32nd, and he rode up to the left flank to encourage the men, and had not time to get there before they rallied on their own initiative. Chamberlain was riding a white pony and got a nasty wipe on the face from a tulwar. These two Muzbee Regiments were within a few yards of the nullah before they could see that there was any nullah at all; it was very deep and narrow. The Ghazis left their matchlocks, etc., in the nullah, and came on with tulwars only. They rushed at the left of the 32nd, and came down the front of the two regiments, cutting and slashing away with their tulwars, and every one of them was killed. They came out to die and they did die, but they did some mischief. The whole affair did not take three minutes I think. The 93rd and 71st were holding the camp in the Pass, and I have always thought it lucky that I happened to be loolung on when this charge and counter charge took place.

"The Pioneer casualties in this action were, besides the five B.O.'s already mentioned, 23rd four killed and two I.O.'s and thirty-eight wounded, 32nd three killed and one I.O. and eighteen wounded, which proves the severity of the charge, the total being seventy-one. The firing ceased about half-past four and the troops bivouacked for their second night out in the open. Thus terminated the first

important combined action of the sister regiments, in which they had but gloriously upheld the honour of the Muzbee, their regiments, and the Khalsa and the Crown. As in the days of old in the Khalsa armies the Muzbee were in the front of the fight and bore the first onslaught of the enemy. Pushed back at first by weight of numbers and the suddenness of the attack, they soon rallied, and killed every single Hindustani Fanatic of those two hundred, not allowing one to escape."



Condition GVF, lovely patina and original ribbons. Officially engraved naming to Abyssinia. Ex DNW 2010. A fine and scarce officer Umbeyla casualty pair.